

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8-13, and 16-21 are pending in this application. By this Response, claims 1, 3, 9-13, and 21 are amended and claims 2, 5, 14, and 15 are canceled. Independent claim 1 is amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 15 and its intervening claim 14. Claims 9-13 are amended to incorporate subject matter similar to allowable claim 15 and its intervening claim 14. Claim 21 is amended to be in independent form. Claim 3 is amended for clarification based on the amendments to claim 1.

Applicants have amended claims 1, 3, 9-13, and 21 and canceled claims 2, 5, 14, and 15 from further consideration in this application. Applicants are not conceding in this application that those claims are not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the allowable subject matter noted by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue these and other claims in one or more continuations and/or divisional patent applications.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

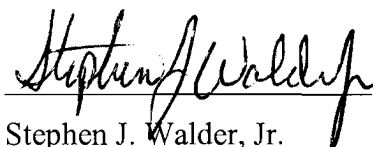
Applicants thank Examiner Neway for the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 15 and 21. By this Response, claim 1 is amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 15 and its intervening claim, claim 14. Thus, it is Applicants' understanding that claim 1 now stands in condition for allowance. Similarly, independent claims 9-13 are also amended to incorporate subject matter similar to allowable claim 15 and its intervening claim 14 in the respective terminology of each of these independent claims. Thus, claims 9-13 now contain allowable subject matter. Claim 21 is amended to be in independent form and thus, is also allowable. In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the independent claims, and thus the dependent claims by virtue of their dependency, now pending in the present application contain allowable subject matter. Accordingly Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the Final Office Action and allowance of the application.

II. Conclusion

It is respectfully urged that the subject application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number if in the opinion of the Examiner such a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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